

• Abroad •

Copenhagen, Denmark. It is becoming clear that the Berlin "flag incidents," in which Communists have hoisted and West German police hauled down the new East German flag, are symbolic of a new international drive by Communist East Germany to get formal recognition. At a gymnasium show in Copenhagen, a book fair in Vienna, a market in Baghdad, a bicycle-football championship meet in Stuttgart, the East Germans have been flaunting the flag and West German representatives have been protesting its presence. Following the example of their West German colleagues, the Paris police expressed the solidity of the Adenauer-de Gaulle entente by removing the flag that Communists had hoisted at a volley ball match in which East Germans were competing.

Florence, Italy. Although the convention results are neither clear nor conclusive, Amintore Fanfani was for the time being defeated in his attempt to push Italy's dominant Christian Democratic Party into a leftward coalition with Pietro Nenni's fellow-traveling Socialists. Prime Minister Segni managed to win a majority for his pro-Western, more or less "modern Republican" policy, and his parliamentary alliance with the small parties of the Right. He did so, however, by smothering rather than by clarifying issues. The left wing, even though it lost the convention vote, was unified and qualitatively strengthened by a more resolute facing of issues.

Warsaw, Poland. A 25 per cent hike in meat prices, the effort—unsuccessful—to get a \$200 million agricultural credit from Washington, Church-State conflict, and reorganization of the Cabinet, combine to signalize a new period of severe tension within Poland. The controlling social factor behind domestic Polish developments continues to be the silent secession of the peasants from Communism. In 1956 this forced the government to liquidate the collective farm system, and was indirectly the cause of the general loosening up of the regime. Today's food scarcities result from the refusal of the peasants to raise meat for an economy that does not provide them, in return, with tools and consumer goods. Those Polish intellectuals who realize that their own surprising intellectual freedom rests ultimately on peasant resistance are fearful that Gomulka will begin a drive for farm recollectivization.

Riga, Latvia. Beneath the surface, profound political passions are finding expression in the career of the altogether non-political Mikhail Tal. At 22 years of age, Tal has just won the international candidates' chess tournament, held at Belgrade, and thus gets the right to challenge the Russian master, Botvinnik, next year for the world championship. Tal, by birth a native of one of the most persecuted of Russia's captive nations, plays with an extreme of boldness—described by some as "brinksmanship" pushed to the very edge of disaster—that has disconcerted all opponents. His only weakness is in his

end game—presumably because he has seldom had to play through to the end. Though his interests—chess, music (as so often with chess players) and philology—are noncontroversial, he has become a national Latvian hero, much as Casablanca became a hero for Cubans.

Lhasa, Tibet. Recent events are confirming the report published in this space, September 5, that Communist Chinese operations in Tibet have been designed to transform that tableland into a "base for the strategic threats for which its geography naturally adapts it." The road and airfield construction program can be explained only in strategic rather than economic terms. The current raids into Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh and elsewhere are probes to test Indian, Southeast Asian and world reaction. But the increased Communist activities in Calcutta and West Bengal suggest an even broader strategic plan than "liberation" of the border states. The longer-term Chinese Communist objective includes a breakthrough to the Indian Ocean, to which Bhutan is an obvious stepping-stone. Indian Communists have asked Peiping to soften pressures until after the February election in Kerala.

Baghdad, Iraq. The forces coming to bear on Iraq with mounting intensity suggest that though General el Kassem is recovering from the physical wounds suffered in September's assassination attempt, he will not be able to sustain his "Bonapartist" tightrope act much longer. The Nasserites are pressing from both within and without, and UAR troops are reported on the Syria-Iraq border. The Communists, in pursuit of the Russian objective of making Iraq a channel to the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, demand reconstitution of the People's Militia. The nationalists seek an "independent" policy with a bid for Iraq leadership of the Arab world. Russian, British and American Intelligence fish in every political pond. The fanatic Colonel Mahdawi—generally considered a Communist front man—back from Peiping, offers to "again be a roaring voice in defense of our Leader." Nationalist General Ahmed Saleh al-Ahdi announces a "second plot" against Kassem's life. Kassem's delay in leaving the hospital begins to seem more political than medical.

London, England. In his maiden speech to Parliament, Mr. John Mackie, new Labor Member from Enfield, presented Labor's answer to the problem of juvenile delinquency: "I have been watching the habits of Members. In the cafeteria they usually have a cup of tea, saturated with white sugar, and two chocolate biscuits as their main diet. They then sit around in comfortable chairs. That is a very bad habit. If Members would only buy a glass of milk, a slice of brown bread, a tomato and some lettuce, then not only would they be setting an example of preventive medicine but, if they would also go to the gymnasium and take some exercise, doctors would be out of business and they would be setting an example that the country might follow. The horticulture and milk industries would be put on their feet."

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